

If our nation is to continue being the greatest nation on earth, it is important that we continue to safeguard what makes us great, our people and our resources. I urge each and every citizen to help make our communities greener, cleaner, and more pleasant places to live by joining me and taking the time to plant a tree. It is with great gratitude and pride that I rise to honor and celebrate Arbor Day and all that it stands for.

HONORING IOWA MIDDLE LEVEL
PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR GARY
HATFIELD

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gary Hatfield on being selected as the Iowa Middle Level Principal of the Year. Gary serves as the principal at Taft Middle School in Cedar Rapids which is in my district. Gary was selected because of his leadership in implementing a system of learning supports for students and teachers.

Mr. Hatfield began his career as a math teacher at Wilson Middle School. In 2008, he came to Taft Middle School to serve as the principal. He received his bachelor's degree in math from Iowa State University, and master's degrees in middle school math education and educational administration from the University of Northern Iowa.

Mr. Hatfield was selected for this award by a committee of Iowa middle level principals, and he is now a candidate for National Middle School Principal of the Year. Gary has proven that he is a leader at his school and throughout the Cedar Rapids community. I'm proud to call him a constituent, and congratulate him on all of his success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE
OPTIONS FOR VULNERABLE POP-
ULATIONS ACT

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the bipartisan Strengthening Healthcare Options for Vulnerable Populations Act.

This legislation, which I will introduce today, extends the authorization of Medicare Advantage Dual Special Needs Plans, D-SNPs, and makes necessary improvements to this valuable program for vulnerable seniors.

Special Needs Plans, or SNPs, are a type of Medicare Advantage Plan with membership limited to a specific population with specific diseases or characteristics, and tailored benefits, provider choices, and drug formularies developed to best meet the needs of the group they serve.

Dual Special Needs Plans, or D-SNPs, are plans developed for individuals who are both Medicare and Medicaid eligible. The Medicare dual eligible population is low-income and more likely to have complex and costly

healthcare needs. Nationally, it costs \$300 billion to care for this population. D-SNPs are driving improved care outcomes and greater efficiency eliminating redundancies between the two programs.

There are 125,000 dual eligible individuals in Arizona and nine million nationally. More than half of the dual eligibles in my state are enrolled in a D-SNP.

D-SNPs in Arizona are well-run and have demonstrated success: 31 percent lower rate of hospitalization; 43 percent lower rate of days in hospital; 9 percent lower emergency use; 21 percent lower readmission rate; 3 percent higher preventive care services.

But D-SNPs are not just about controlling cost and improving healthcare delivery for a vulnerable population. D-SNPs, because of their innovative and targeted services, are a valuable option for seniors trying to live with dignity or people with disabilities trying to live fuller lives.

Bonnie Grant is in her 60s and lives in south Phoenix. Through her D-SNP, she has access to a transportation called Van Go. Bonnie uses the service to go shopping and other places "instead of being stuck at home." She said that it helps because "instead of being holed up in your home," she can be engaged in the community and enjoy her life.

The Van Go benefit is the type of creative service offered by D-SNPs that improve the wellbeing of enrollees.

Joseph Ford lives in suburban Phoenix. He was disabled in a car accident. The hands-on managed care he receives through his D-SNPs, including in-home visits, allows Mr. Ford to stay in his home and live a fuller life. Keeping individuals like Mr. Ford in their homes instead of institutional care facilities is better for the beneficiary and a significant cost savings to the Medicaid and Medicare programs.

We need creative and commonsense solutions to control the cost and improve the quality of services provided to this vulnerable population, which includes seniors and single working mothers. That is what D-SNPs are doing and that is why we introduce this bill today.

The Strengthening Healthcare Options for Vulnerable Populations Act will allow seniors to have greater choice, help drive down cost and improve outcomes.

First, this bill extends authorization for D-SNPs and requires that plans fully integrate Medicare and Medicaid services, while providing states with flexibility to make the plans work for their citizens. This long term authorization will create stability in the SNP program, thereby allowing states, the federal government and the private sector to begin to develop consistent strategies for addressing care for dual eligibles. Beneficiaries will also know that the plan they have chosen will not be taken away.

Second, the bill directs CMS in coordination with State Medicaid Directors to develop a clearly defined role for state Medicaid agencies in contracting and oversight of integrated D-SNPs.

Third, the legislation follows the recommendation of National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD) to designate the Medicare-Medicaid Coordinating Office within CMS as the dedicated point of contact to assist states with ongoing D-SNP administration issues, including eliminating redundancies and

improving coordination of Medicare and Medicaid services and streamlining the flow of information to beneficiaries. The bill would also allow HHS to adjust Medicare's processes, timelines and requirements to improve the seamless delivery of patient-centered services across the care continuum.

Fourth, the bill provides additional protections to beneficiaries by requiring CMS, in coordination with states, to establish a streamlined dispute resolution process and by requiring Medicare to continue to provide coverage during the dispute process.

Lastly, our legislation improves the Medicare Advantage star ratings program to better evaluate and incentivize D-SNP performance. The bill directs CMS to take the necessary steps to recognize and incentivize performance by plans who serve more difficult or complex populations like the dual population.

Ensuring that vulnerable seniors continue to have access to these valuable plans is an important part of ensuring that they can live out their golden years with dignity.

The Strengthening Healthcare Options for Vulnerable Populations Act extends an important program for one of Arizona's most vulnerable populations. This bill ensures that seniors and others in these plans will be able to keep the managed care services they have selected. This bill provides states with greater flexibility to control cost and provide improved services. Finally, this bill can help control cost for a very expensive population nationally while at the same time improving healthcare outcomes.

I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREA
STACKHOUSE

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Andrea Stackhouse of Neumann Monson Architects in Des Moines, Iowa, for being named a 2014 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines area who are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious distinction, which is based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2014 class of Forty Under 40 honorees join an impressive roster of nearly 600 business leaders and growing.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Andrea in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud Ms. Stackhouse for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Andrea on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2014 Forty Under 40 class continued success.

HONORING GARIFUNA-AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to recognize the 217th anniversary of the forcible transfer of the Garifuna people from St. Vincent to Central America, which is to be observed on April 12, 2014. Each year this day serves as an important reminder of the rich history and heritage that is an intrinsic part of this community, and of the history of the United States. This commemoration is the culmination of Garifuna-American Heritage Month, which celebrates the important and unique contributions of the Garifuna community to my home borough of the Bronx, to New York City, and to our nation as a whole.

The Garifuna community has a unique heritage, language, and culture. As descendants of West African slaves, Venezuelan Caribs and Arawaks, Garifuna community has long been an important part of several nations, including Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Nicaragua. The Garifuna people first arrived in New York City in the 1930s as part of the merchant marines, and their numbers quickly grew in several neighborhoods. The Garifuna people are now a long established part of the fabric of New York City, and of my district in the Bronx. Today, I am proud to be able to pay tribute to their history and their future.

Mr. Speaker, Garifuna-American Heritage Month celebrates the unique cultural contributions and ethnic pride this community has provided to the melting pot that is New York City. I am confident that this month will continue to exist as an important cultural landmark celebration for many years to come. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the significance of April 12th in the history of the Garifuna people, and in recognizing their contributions to New York City and to our nation.

HONORING MAINE'S PUBLIC
SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS**HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Maine's Public Safety Dispatchers for their essential service to our communities in times of emergency. Maine's public safety telecommunicators are committed to putting the safety and interests of the community before themselves, and I would like to commend them for their invaluable hard work and commitment to ensuring our safety.

These unsung heroes are our country's "unseen first responders." They are the men and women who answer the calls of those citizens asking for help with a promise that help is, in fact, on its way. We place our trust in these individuals every day of the year and rely on their knowledge and professionalism as they make critical decisions, obtain information, and quickly dispatch needed aid. Regardless of the call, they always answer with compassion,

persistence, and patience. As a result, their work is imperative to our country's citizens, police, fire and emergency medical assistance personnel.

They remain calm in times of crisis and helpful in times of hurting. Their voices guide a young mother through infant CPR, talk an accident victim out of going into shock, and provide comfort to those who have been harmed or injured as they wait for emergency personnel to arrive. Yet, they seldom witness the product of their good work because they do not see the young mother's face when her infant begins to breathe again or the accident victim's face as first responders come into sight. It is for these reasons that they deserve our special appreciation and recognition.

In addition to the services they directly provide to the general public, they also handle governmental communications related to forestry, conservation, highway safety, and natural disasters. This means that while most individuals seek shelter during a flood or blizzard, the public safety telecommunicators are at their posts ensuring that everyone in their communities, including the police officers and firefighters, return home safely.

These telecommunicators are selfless, skilled, and often overlooked. Their daily service to the public goes without due recognition by the many beneficiaries of their services. Today, I would like to take a moment and extend my deepest gratitude on behalf of the state of Maine and applaud them for their honorable service.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognition and appreciation of the many public safety telecommunicators of Maine.

HONORING THE EAST BAY RE-
GIONAL PARK DISTRICT'S 80TH
BIRTHDAY**HON. JERRY McNERNEY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the East Bay Regional Park District (the District) for 80 years of creating beautiful parkland and open spaces in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The District has over 114,000 acres, 65 parks and 1,200 miles of trails, which allow people to enjoy nature, outdoor recreation, and environmental education experiences.

Through its Healthy Parks, Healthy People Campaign, the District has worked to promote awareness of the parks, trails and events they offer to both counties. The District has always been forward thinking in planning how to manage and conserve our nation's resources while also providing the public with a variety of recreational activities.

East Bay Regional Parks has been a key participant in conservation for eighty years. The Park District has been created a master plan for the East Bay to preserve our resources through good management while also providing the public with a variety of recreation and outdoor activities.

I ask my colleagues to congratulate the East Bay Regional Parks on its 80th birthday and to recognize its invaluable contributions to our natural resources and our communities.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE
CLEBURNE COUNTY 911**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today ask for the House's attention to honor the Cleburne County 911 for their outstanding service to the citizens of Cleburne County.

The second week of April is designated as National Public Safety Communicator Week. This is a time to honor the telecommunications personnel in the public safety community. The Cleburne County 911's mission states that they strive to provide effective public safety services through the appropriate dispatch of fire, police, medical, and rescue units with the least possible delay. They live up to this mission each and every day.

Like all of East Alabama's 911 public safety personnel, Cleburne County's Public Safety Communicators provide local citizens with an invaluable service. They offer peace of mind, and they provide the highest level of emergency communications service possible.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking the Public Safety Communicators at the Cleburne 911 for their dedication to protecting the citizens of Cleburne County.

HONORING IOWA ASSISTANT PRIN-
CIPAL OF THE YEAR RYAN
DAVIS**HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ryan Davis on being selected as the Iowa Assistant Principal of the year. Ryan serves as the assistant principal at Vinton-Shellsburg High School in my district. Ryan was selected because of his commitment to student success, his vision of student learning and his work with parents and the community.

Mr. Davis began his career as a science teacher in Minnesota. In 2008, he came to Vinton as the assistant principal and at-risk coordinator. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa, his master's degree in educational leadership from Southwest State University and his certificate in education administration from Saint Mary's University.

Mr. Davis was selected for this award by a committee of Iowa assistant principals, and he is now a candidate for National Assistant Principal of the Year. Ryan has proven that he is a leader at his school and throughout the Vinton-Shellsburg community. I'm proud to call him a constituent, and congratulate him on all of his success.

TRIBUTE TO SHANE STARK

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Shane Stark of